# HAPPY HOUSE

By Jane D. Abbott

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"Maybe it'll go around," assured her sister with as much tenderness as she was capable of showing.

At that moment the door opened slowly and B'lindy, a strangely softened look on her old face tip-toed in, carrying in her arms the baby, sound asleep.
"I just brought it up for Miss
Milly to see, it's that cute!" she explained, in a whisper.

The poor little thing," Aunt Milly timidly touched the moist chubby hand. B'lindy, with the air of having accomplished some great feat, laid the baby carefully upon the couch.

'Fed its poor little stomick and it dropped right off to sleep -it'll forget things now," she said proudly.

With a different feeling in each of their hearts the three women stared for a moment at the sleeping baby. Miss Sabrina spoke first. Her voice was cold and crisp.

"Take that baby right out of here, B'lindy, and get Jonathan to carry it back where it came from.

A rumble of thunder, closer and louder, startled them. Miss Milly sat bolt upright, whitefaced, and reached out a hand. "Oh-sister! Not in the

storm!" B'lindy rose majestically and towered over her mistress. When, down behind her shut doors, that baby had gone to sleep in B'lindy's arms, something had wakened in her 60-year old heart; it throbbed in her voice now. She spoke slowly, "I guess the Almighty sent Davy Hopworth here with this poor little young 'un! Like as not it would go hungry more'n once, and if three women here can't take care of a little baby-well, the Lord that suffered little children to come unto Him like's not will hold us to 'count for it! I guess Happy House would be a heap happier if there was less high and mightiness and more of the human milk of kindness in it, and doin' for others like little Miss Anne's always tryin' to do, anyway!" And quite breathless from her outburst B'lindy knelt

folded sheltering arms over it. For the briefest of moments no one stirred. Then Miss Sabina rose hurriedly, and, mumbling something incoherent, left the room.

beside the baby and defiantly

Across the baby B'lindy's eyes, feverishly bright, met Miss Milly's anxious glance.

"Don't know what she said, but, Milly Leavitt, sure's I'm alive I saw a tear in Sabriny Leavitt's eye! I guess we keep this baby."

# CHAPTERS XXII.

# Real Leavitts and Others.

The storm overtook Peter and Nancy on a lonely road that Peter had taken as a short cut home.

At a sharp flash of lightning Nancy clutched Peter's arm. "Pe-ter! Oh-h! It's silly for me to be afraid! It's only when

it crackles!" "I thought we could make

Freedom before it broke. But I guess not. Here comes the rain!" It came, in a blinding deluge.

"Sit close to me, Nancy. We must get to a house somewhere

along this road!"
"B'lindy's bones certainly did
feel right," Nancy giggled, excitedly. "Oh-h!" at another
flash. "Peter! I'm—I'm such a coward. Don't you think that's the worst?"

Peter hoped that it wasn't. He did not mind at all the flashes that sent little quivers of alarm through Nancy and made her huddle closer to him; he enjoyed the sense of protecting her, though his face, bent grimly upon the puddled road ahead, gave no hint of his real feeling.

"If this bus only had its curtains! Are you soaked?"

"You are, too, Peter! Do you suppose this is a cloudburst? Can the car make it?" For the little Ford was floundering uncertainly along the flooded road.

'What an end to our pienie," declared Peter, disgustedly. "Ha—a house, as I live! See, ahead there.'

Through the sheet of rain Nancy made out a low-gabled cottage almost hidden by the

"It looks deserted," she declared, disappointedly.

"It'll be shelter, anyway. Deserted nothing-hear the dog! When I stop make a dash for the

The dog's bark was by way of a welcome rather than a warning, for, as he bounded toward the road, his shaggy tail wagged in a most friendly way. As Naney, following Peter's command, made a dash for shelter, the door of the cottage opened hospitably and a little old woman, unmindful of the fury of the rain, reached out to draw Nancy in.

"Come right in! Bless me, you're soaked." She had a cheery, piping voice and a way of repeating, "well, well, well," as though everything on earth was an exciting surprise.

"Won't your young man come in, too. Sit right over here by the fire! I told sister Janie that I'd light a few sticks of wood to keep it cheery. It got so darklike. I'll set the kettle over and have a cup of tea in the shake of a dog's tail. When it storms in these parts it does storm, dearie! How wet you are!" She fussed over the fire and over her kettle and over Nancy's wet blouse. "Now, Janie, isn't it nice to have folks come here out of the storm?"

Then Nancy, through the gloom of the storm, made out that Janie was another little old woman sitting in an old arm chair in the window. Quite unmindful of the storm, she was tranquilly knitting.

"Folks don't come. by this road so often," she smiled back. "Aren't you afraid-sitting there?" Nancy cried. As she spoke there came a flash of lightning followed almost simultaneously by a roar of thunder that threatened the weather-beaten walls.

The sister called Janie waited steilingly, her head cocked on one side as though she enjoyed the storm.

"Afraid, honey? Goodness, no. Saphrony and I've lived through too many of these storms to be afraid! Isn't the Lord watching over us just like all folks?'

"And didn't He just bring you poor souls here out of the storm?" added the older woman. "This tea will steep in a minit and I'm goin' to call that

Peter had been trying to fasten a makeshift arrangement that wou'd keep Nancy's seat dry. four years before. He was glad enough to give it up at their hostess' call. He looked so much like a drowned cat with the water dripping from his hat and shoulders that Nancy was as concerned as Saphrony and Janie.

"You poor children," Saphrony cried, running around Peter in a flutter of worry. "Take your coat right off this minit! Ain't I glad I started that fire! Fetch another stick, Janie. Well, well, well, now ain't it a nice storm that brings folks here for shelter?"

The fire did feel good against their soaked backs and Nancy and Peter enjoyed the chatter of the two funny, fussy little old women. The kettle sang merrily, too, and steamed invitingly. Janie, at her sister's bidding, opened a treasure-chest in the other room and brought from it a piece of fruit cake, wrapped in a red and white napkin.
"A bite'll taste good with our

tea," Saphrony explained, apologetically. "Arn't they the cutest pair?"

Nancy whispered to Peter. "And isn't it the funniest little house?"

There seemed to be only the living room and kitchen com-bined and the bedroom adjoining. The furniture in it was very old and very worn, but every-thing was spotlessly clean. The red and white cover on the table, the braided rugs on the uneven floor and the piece work cushions in the armed chairs added a homey, cosy touch that made up for the little luxuries lacking. Even in the storm the room was

cheery. Nancy forgot the storm in her enjoyment of the situation. Janie removed the red and white cover and spread a very worn white cloth. Saphrony took from a cupboard built in the wall a shiny pewter sugar-bowl and cream pitcher. Peter, amid a storm of protest from both little

women, drew up some chairs. "Now you stay right there by the fire," cried Saphrony. "We

like to fuss! Janie and I don't have folks here often. The hot ea'll warm you.

The tea tasted very good, both Peter and Nancy declared. "It's just like a party," Nancy added, nibbling on the thinnest shaving of fruit cake. Her evident pleasure set both little old ladies off in a soft cackling of satisfaction.

"Do you two live here all alone?" Nancy asked, passing her cup for more tea. "It seems so lonely.

'Lonely-not a bit! Janie and I've lived here all our lives. Not many folks come 'long this road, but we don't get lonesome -not a bit! There's always something to do. Folks just gets lonesome and miserable when they're idle, I always tell Janie. A little more cake, Mister-

"Peter," laughed Nancy.
"Well, I shall remember this storm because it's given us such a jolly half-hour, as well as a drenching! Oh, look—the sun!"

Through the mist of rain and the purple gloom the sun burst warm and golden, pouring through the bare windows into the little room, touching every corner and cranny with a cheerful glow.

"How wonderful," Nancy ex-claimed. "It's the bright lining, all right-the cloud has turned inside out! I believe," she turned to Peter, "that when the sun does shine it shines brighter -here! You two have magic."

"Janie and I never shut it out," laughed the sister Saphrony. "We say it's God's way of smiling and frowning. There's no storm but what passes and we're just mighty glad you two children came 'long this way. Goin' to Freedom?''

Afterwards Nancy said to Peter that that had been the most curious thing about the two friendly little old women—that they had not right at first asked who they were nor where they were going!

Peter answered from the window. "Yes-we thought this road would be shorter." Then, to Nancy: "Do you think we can venture now? I guess the storm's passed."

Nancy nodded. "We'd better My aunts are worrying dreadfully, I'm afraid. But we've loved it—here. May we come again sometime? And may we not know who it is that has given us shelter?"

"Why, yes-I never thought to tell! Most folks know us, but maybe you're new in these parts. We're Saphrony and Janie Leavitt."

"What!" cried Nancy with such astonishment that Peter turned from the door. "Why, I -I am Anne Leavitt!" she said in very much the same way she had spoken in the French class,

The two little old women laughed. "I guess you're one of the Happy House Leavitts— they're real Leavitts. Sister Janie and I are only plain Leavitts, Saphrony explained with a twinkling in her eyes that seemed to say that to confuse real Leavitts with plain Leavitts was very, very funny. "Are you Miss Sabriny's niece?"

Nancy avoided the question. 'Arn't you any relation to usup at Happy House?"
"Not as anybody ever knew of.

There's Leavitts and Leavitts all over New England, I guess. We've always been poor as Job."

"Well, I shall always pretend we're related," declared Nancy, warmly, "because it's been so nice here!"

While Peter was carefully tucking her into the seat with much lamenting that it had gotten so wet, Nancy was staring reflectively at the funny little weather beaten cottage. From the door smiled the two sisters.

"I wish," she said, "that I could take a piece of their philosophy back to Happy House!" She leaned out to wave her hand once more. "Hasn't it been fun? I'm glad now that it stormed."

As they splashed along toward Freedom, Nancy fell into a sudden quiet. · Her mind was held by an overwhelming desire to tell Peter, in this last hour she might have alone with him, the whole truth-that she, like the two sisters they had left, was not a real Leavitt, of that day back in college, of Anne's pleading and her yielding. Twice she opened her lips to speak, then shut them quickly. There was something in Peter's strong profile that made her afraid. Once he turned quickly and saw her eyes upon him with a frightened, troubled axpression in their depths.

"What is it, Nancy ?" he asked tenderly. She couldn't tell him—she could not bear to sa; his face when he knew the truth! She

tried to speak lightly.

"I was thinking how much 1'd grown to like-things-around here and how I hate to—go away. Peter, will you keep Nonie and Davy doing happy things-like other children. And, Peter—do you hate people that act lies?"

Peter laughed—Nancy was so deliciously childlike. Then he suddenly colored to the very roots of his harr.

"Generally-I haven't much use for people that can't stick pretty well to the truth. But when there may be some reason -someone may start doing it for someone else 'he stopped abruptly. Nancy stared ahead with startled eyes. Did he know? But, no, how could he! It had only been an accident that he had so nearly hit upon the truth.

She could not tell him-she need not tell him; in a few days she would say good-by and go away and never see him again! Theirs had been a pleasant friendship, for awhile she would miss it, but she'd be just plain Nancy Leavitt again, playing with Claire at Merryville or with Daddy somewhere in the mountains or at the seashore, working, too-beginning life. Af-ter a while these weeks at Happy House would seem a curious memory—a dream! Suddenly she shivered.

"Freedom—at last!" ex-claimed Peter, increasing his speed. Ahead they saw the gleam of roofs through the trees. "And it looks as though they'd caught the storm worse than we did!"

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

# What the Chimney Held.

The storm, sweeping down the valley, had reached the heighth of its fury over Freedom.

As the flashes of lightning grew sharper and more frequent, B'lindy bade Miss Milly watch the baby while she made things fast around the house. Both women had been hanging over the sleeping child with something like awe. "Poor little mite—like as not right this minit Sarah Hopkins is watchin' us," B'lindy had whispered, "little bit of a thing, goin' to grow into a big, big man some day! Ain't it just

wonderful, Milly Leavitt?' Milly's awe of the baby had been mixed with alarm at the increasing intensity of the storm. So that, as B'lindy moved to go,

she held out an imploring hand.
"Now you just hold yourself together. Milly Leavitt—that storm ain't goin' to hurt you! Anyways, it's lots more likely to if I don't see that everything's shut up tight, so's the lightnin' can't get in! Ouch!" Even B'lindy covered her eyes from a blinding flash. "You hold on to that baby, Milly Leavitt," she commanded, bolting from the

room. But each flash, each roar of thunder, poor Miss Milly's courage ebbed. Her cry-rising above the noise of the storm brought Miss Sabrina and B'lindy to her.

"I can't - help - it!" she sobbed, covering her face. "It's so—so dreadful! And where's -Nancy! Oh-oh!" Even Miss Sabrina's face was

pale with alarm. "You two women are like so many children," cried B'lindy, taking command. "Milly Leavitt, you'll work yourself into fits. Nancy's all right somewheres! I guess Peter Hyde's man enough to take care of her-mebbe they ain't where this storm is, anyways! Sabrina—you take that baby where Milly's yellin' won't wake it. Goodness knows the crashin's bad enough! Now Milly, you just hide your poor head in my lap," with grand tender-ness, "I ain't afraid a bit."

Sabrina had no choice— B'lindy had put the baby into her arms and almost showed her

to the door. She carried it to her own room and sat down very carefully. Never in her whole life had she held a little baby. What would she do if it wakened suddenly? And if it kicked and squirmed, might she not drop it?

(To be continued next week.)

Life is very good to us. One need never grow old. One can only die Why begin to die before one must? Life is always new-is always gay. Life is good, life is like a dancing flame.-Sarah Bernhardt.

Senator Calder, of New York, is said to favor a federal monopoly in the manufacture of firearms as a means to reduce violent crime. Should he introduce into the Senate a bill embodying the idea it would be sure of popular support.

Remember this that there is a proper dignity and proportion to be observed in the performance of every not of life-Mercus Aurellus.



'INGLING with abundant energy, appetites hearty, nerves I strong and steady and their faces radiant with the glow of perfect health, the entire family of Louis Gingras, 9 Harrison Ave., Providence, R. I., are an eloquent tribute to the powers of Tanlac, the greatest family medicine the world has ever known.

"I've put Tanlac to the test four daughter, as well as myself, have all enthusiastic over Tanlac. It's certainly been built up from a half-sick, run- a medicine for all the family." down, worn-out set of people into a healthy, happy family brimful of new message: "My little girl, my son and

only typical of thousands of others about." Mrs. Bert Hewer, 193 East whose statements are on file in the Avenue, Toronto, Ontario. Tanlac offices. Hardly a day passes that does not bring scores of such mes- cine' here in our Virginia home, besages of praise from every part of the cause it restored my mother and sister United States and Canada from fami- to perfect health, just the same as it lies where mother, father, son and has done me," is the enthusiastic daughter have all found health, con- statement of Mrs. J. F. Robertson, tentment and the joys of living Danville, Va. through simply taking a course of Tanlac.

Take, for instance, the case of John Widner, 1571 Roosevelt Ave., Los Angeles, Calif., who says: "My wife, myself and little boy are now as healthy, wonderful benefits of health and haphappy family as you will ever see—and it's all due to Tanlac."

Or that of Mrs. John Marquis and ened by the gloom of sickness, sufferher family of sixteen living in Man- ing and despair. chester, N. H., at 292 Belmont St. She says: "Tanlac has been the only homes where any member of the fammedicine used in our house for two lly is thin, run down and weakened years and it has kept every one of the from loss of appetite, caused by indi-

441 South Wood St., writes: "We will no doubt bring the sunshine of vigornever be without Tanlac in our house ous health back into their lives and after the remarkable way it has built yours, just as it has done in so many up my wife, my son and myself to thousands of other cases. Do not de-

Representative of New York is the times right in my own family and it case of Chas. E. Van Colt's family, rehasn't failed me once," declared Mr. siding at 129 Fourth Ave., Albany. He Gingras. "My wife, my son and my says: "Every member of our family is

From far-away Canada comes this And the experience of this family is health now and Tanlac brought it all shout." Mrs. Bert Hewer, 193 East

"We call Tanlac 'The Family Medi-

And on through the list, men, women and children from every state in the Union and every province of Canada unhesitatingly come forward and tell in words ringing with sincerity of the piness that Tanlac has brought into their homes that were formerly dark-

And should yours be one of those sixteen here in the best of health." gestion and stomach troubles, you have In Chicago, Frank R. Richards, of at your very door the means that will where we are the very picture of lay. Get a bottle of Tanlac from your health."

# HAD TO HAVE CONSERVATORY

Most Parents of Six Marriageable Daughters Will Sympathize With This Home Seeker.

Charles M. Schwab said at a reception in New York:

"The world is hankering after disarmament and universal peace as the househunter hankered after a conserv-

"A househunter was looking for a cheap, smallish house with a large conservatory. The agent showed him a number of houses, but as they all lacked conservatories the hunter turned them down. Finally the agent said in a disgusted tone:

".'Of course I thought your conservatory idea was just a whim. A cheap nine-room house with a conservatory! Why, man, it ain't to be found. What's the reason you're so crazy after a conservatory, anyhow?'

"'Well, confidentially,' said the househunter, 'it's like this. Wife and I have got six daughters, and all six have had young fellows kind of sparkin' round 'em for a long, long time; so what we need, you see, is a conservatory. The girls want somewhere to do the ripenin' off in.'"

# Self-Supporting.

An attorney for Los Angeles advertised for a chauffeur. Some twentyodd responded and were being questioned as to qualifications, efficiency and whether married or single. Finally, turning to a negro chap, he said: "How about you, George; are you

married?"



Is It Progress? "It may be progress or it may be another form of motion," said Old Man Doodle, "but it is apparent that nowadays the loss of a reputation for probity and virtue is not so much of a handicap as it was a few years ago. In fact. I have heard some handclanping on the technical acquittal of selfconfessed notorious crooks."-Chicago

Catch as Catch Can.

Daily News.

"Don't rush away, old man." "I'must. My wife is sitting up and if I miss the last train I shall catch it, but if I catch it I shall miss it; that is, what I would catch if I didn't catch it. therefore I don't want to miss it bemarried?"

"Naw-sir, boss, naw-sir. Ah makes cause I don't want to catch it. Catch mah own livin'."—From Judge.



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